

Skillet Curling



There is only one ice rink in Chattanooga, Tennessee: Ice On The Landing.

As a child in Appleton, Wisconsin I would see an ice rink about every six blocks. We even had one on the other end of the block from where we lived. What the town did was flood what during the summer was the baseball park. Every winter, they would turn it into a massive ice rink.

Even before I started school, I was allowed to put my ice skates on while sitting on the basement steps inside the house. I put all of my other gear on, and my brother and I would set off for the ice rink. Like I said, we didn't have far to go, and the sidewalks were often snow or ice covered so we didn't even damage our skates.

I loved ice skating so much that I was known to go after breakfast, after lunch, and even after dinner. I became such a good ice skater that people in the neighborhood called me "Little Peggy Fleming". If you are old enough, you'll remember the famous Olympic skater. If not, you can look her up.

When I was about 10, I asked my mom if I could take ice skating lessons. I had dreams of well...you know. The closest place that

taught serious youngsters to skate was about 30 miles away. Once a week they'd take you by bus to Green Bay, Wisconsin where they gave lessons at the Ice Arena. We had 7 children in our household, so it did not take long for my mother to turn me down. From then on, I was plastered to the TV watching whatever ice skating I could find, even hockey. I wanted to learn.

By the time I was 12, I was twirling, leaving the ground to do jumps, and skating to music at the local, large public ice rink. The school I went to was right next to the public ice rink. After school, we would go skating with a bunch of kids. We'd play tag. My claim to fame was that I could outskate every boy at the park. Girls too, of course. I was never "it". That still makes me smile.

The ice rink here in Chattanooga is only a block from where I live. Sadly, I have not skated there yet. Due to Covid, it was closed for 2 years. Now, I look and it's too crowded or it doesn't fit into my schedule. When I do skate I don't just want to skate around the ring with the "rookies". I want to be able to spin and jump! At my current age, I'm sure I'd be very conservative in my moves. Unless I can go in circles and spin around I know I won't be satisfied.

The ice rink is located at the historic Chattanooga Choo Choo. It's so much warmer here than in Wisconsin, they form the ice using an electric chiller that runs 24/7. Kind of like a refrigerator. Otherwise, they'd have a big puddle. I'm sure it's quite expensive to operate, so the "season" is only 10 weeks long.

The last open weekend they hold a "Skillet Curling Contest" on the ice. If you know curling, you know it's not usually played with cast iron skillets. Not far from Chattanooga is the world headquarters of Lodge Cast Iron, in South Pittsburg. Yes, they

supply the skillets for the tournament. They make more cast iron skillets than anyone. It makes total sense then for the rink to hold a cast iron skillet curling contest. The teams in the tournament are not only having fun. They're trying to raise money as well: for the Chattanooga Food Bank.

Cast iron is my favorite skillet. Maybe soon I will tell you my cast iron skillet story. In the meantime, this video is pretty funny.

Enjoy!

Cheers,